

## **James P. Campbell Letter**

S212

1863

1folder

Manuscripts & Rare Books Division  
Indiana State Library

Finding Aid by: Nikki Stoddard Schofield

### **Biographical Note:**

James P. Campbell was born in 1836. The federal census listed him in French Lick, Orange County, Indiana, in 1860 when he was 25 years old and his wife Priscilla Campbell was 21. When he mustered into Company E, 66<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteers in August 1862, his residence was recorded as Paoli (Adjutant General's Report) and as Orleans (Indiana State Digital Archives). According to the Indiana Adjutant General's Report (page 61, Volume VI) he mustered out on June 3, 1863 as a corporal. Since this letter was written on October 13, 1863, it is more likely the year he was mustered out was 1865. The 66<sup>th</sup> was a three-year regiment. In 1880, James (44) was living with his wife, Priscilla Jane (40) and their six children in French Lick. The children were: Lydia Ann, age 16; William T. S. [Tecumseh Sherman?], age 13; George G., age 11; Sarah Bell, age 9; James, age 7; and Ellie Dot, age 6 months. James died on March 23, 1913, at age 77.

James Campbell wrote this letter to Mr. H. Cowherd about the death of his son, Francis Marion Cowherd. In 1860, William Harrison Cowherd, age 46, was living in French Lick with his wife Celia, age 38, and their children: Cordelia J., age 17; Francis Marion, age 15; Barbary T., age 13; Bryon Y., age 10; Jacob W., age 6; and Lavina A., age 4. The Indiana Adjutant General's Report gives the residence of Francis M. Cowherd as West Baden and the information that he was killed at Collierville, Tenn., Oct. 11, 1863.

#### *Source:*

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com); [Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, Volume VI, 1861-1865, page 61](#); and [www.indianadigitalarchives.org](http://www.indianadigitalarchives.org).

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### **Scope and Content:**

The letter is a single sheet, written in ink, and folded once to the size of 7 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>". It is written on all four pages and relates to events at the Battle of Collierville, Tennessee, on October 11, 1863, at which William Harrison Cowherd's son Marion "was killed in a battle that we had here on Sunday which was on the 11<sup>th</sup>."

They were attacked "by a superior force under General Chalmers." James Ronald Chalmers (1831-1898) was a Confederate Brigadier General who was admitted to the bar in 1853. The Battle of Collierville lasted five hours, beginning at ten in the morning

and ending at three in the afternoon. The Union troops repulsed the Rebels, who were “estimated from four to six thousand strong.” “Our force did not exceed over seven hundred.” Only about two hundred men were in their small fort, and the remaining troops were in rifle pits around the fort or deployed as skirmishers.

James Campbell was part of a camp guard which included Thomas Colens [Collins] and Bedford Brown. [Thomas was killed at Dallas, Georgia on May 28, 1864; and Bedford Brown became a sergeant and was mustered out in June 1865.] “After the fight commenced, the camp guard was ordered into the fort to guard our colored men [?]. Our company seems to be unlucky. It has suffered worse than any in the regiment. We only had four killed dead in the regiment and three of them were out of our company.”

“F. M. [Francis Marion] Cowherd was shot through his body; thought at first he was shot in the mouth but I was mistaken. The ball struck his side near his cartridge box and came out on the other side. W. [Walker] Morris and Aly Sherman were close to him when he was shot. They said he fell dead and made a little noise. They couldn’t tell whether he tried to speak or not. John A. Pinnick [John A. J. Pinsnick, according to the Adjutant General’s Records] was shot through his left breast and fell dead. Green Hubered [Green Hubbard, 21, was married to Maria, 19, and living in Orangeville in 1860] was shot in two or three different places and lived a few hours. We had three wounded in our company. George Car [George W. Carr muster out as a corporal in June 1865] was wounded in the leg. Wintch Steven [Winfield Stephens was mustered out in June 1865] was wounded in the hand. B. Brown [Bedford Brown] was very slightly wounded by a grape shot which grazed his head. It knocked him down but he has got over it now. Marien [Francis Marion Cowherd] and Pinnick were killed while our company [Company E] and company D were making a charge on the Rebels. The Rebels made several attempts to charge on our fort but were repulsed.”

James stated that only four were killed in his regiment, about fifteen wounded, and about thirty taken prisoner. The 13<sup>th</sup> United States regiment of the regular army arrived by train and entered the battle. The Union troops buried forty dead Confederates. “It is reported that General Swinney [Sweeney] took a force from LaGrange and went across and got in the rear of the Rebels that fit [fought] us. We heard cannons firing on yesterday in that direction.” James wrote that yesterday Confederates went in the direction of Holly Springs. “I think they will capture them yet.”

“Marien and Pinnick were both in my mess and we miss them very much, but they are with us no more. They have given their lives for their country and today they are trying the realities of a world unknown to us. They were both fine and good young men and today I believe their spirit is in heaven where death never comes and where war is not. Marien was my bed mate and I feel to mourn with you all.”

“Only a little more than a year ago, we had a full company of one hundred men and today finds us with only about forty. It seems that after more battles and our company will all be gone.” James told about burying Marien, Pinnick, and another soldier in a

large, communal grave. He guesses that the enemy soldiers got Marien's watch. James Scarlet got his money, seven dollars, which he will give to Captain Bivin.

James concluded the letter: "I have given you all of the particulars. I will close by saying to you write when convenient. Still remain as ever your friend 'til death. James P. Campbell."

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### Collection Inventory Item Listing:

*Letter from James P. Campbell, in Collierville, Tennessee, to Harrison Cowherd dated October 13, 1863*

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### Collection Information:

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